

April 2009

Sustainability Now is a monthly bulletin from Sustainability South West (SSW), the region's independent Champion Body for sustainable development. SSW is a charity and its Mission is: 'To champion and assist action now to achieve a South West that is genuinely sustainable: healthy, productive, socially-just & living within environmental limits.'

Water - the forgotten element in climate change?

Guest editorial with thanks to Julian Dennis, Wessex Water and Richard Cresswell, Environment Agency - both also valued SSW Members and Trustees

Water resources are already under pressure in many parts of the country, with some 25 million people living in areas where, believe it or not, there is less available water per person than Spain or Morocco! The average Briton now uses 148 litres – some 260 pints – every day. Not something we can be proud of.



Climate change is expected to reduce the amount of water available in rivers in England and Wales by 10 -15% by 2050, and up to as much as 80% during summer months. This, along with a potential 20 million increase in the population, will put even greater pressure on our limited water supplies.

There's a clear link between our water profligacy and climate change. The transport, heating and treatment of water accounts for over 6% of the UK's carbon footprint - greater than aviation. Metering all households could reduce greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 27-40% of the total UK Carbon Reduction Commitment target.

It's really very simple. By using less water, we take less from the environment and need less energy to treat it.

With energy bills increasing, householders are now turning towards using various energy conservation initiatives to help save them money. But not many people realise that further reductions can be made to electricity bills if we all use the minimum water in homes and gardens.

Water really is the essential element of all life. An ancient Indian sutra [poem] reads:

Waste not water, nor ever spill it

Water is precious, water is sacred

The way you use water is the measure of you

Water is the witness, water is the judge.

This month's other SustainabilityNow headlines at a glance:

- ◆ 10 year review of SSW – out now and Win! ◆ Join today – New, Sustainability Network Membership
- ◆ Low carbon lobbying campaign website goes live - and free resources available
- ◆ Key Messages from International Scientific Congress on Climate Change
- ◆ Regional Sustainable Development Indicators
- ◆ Draft recommendations out now: Embedding SD into new regional arrangements
- ◆ Natural England – to get kids to 'splash out' ◆ Are You Ready for Comprehensive Area Assessment?
- ◆ Farewell to Future Footprints... ...And good luck in its new venture to Future Foundations
- ◆ Sust'Ometer ◆ On your radar ◆ Up & Coming ◆ Over to YOU!



10 year review of Sustainability South West – Out now & Win!

To celebrate 10 years of SSW (1998-2008) a review of SSW's work over the past decade has been published, available to download on our free publications page at: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/free_publications/ Direct link to Review: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/assets/files/pdf/10_year_Review.pdf

The review also features a competition to win a hamper of sustainable goodies (see page 13) by telling us:

a) What SSW's best achievement has been over the past decade?

b) What is the most important thing that SSW can do to champion sustainability in the future?

Email answers to info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk. Closing date: 30 June.

Join Today – New, Sustainability Network Membership

Also featuring in SSW's decadal review is application information to join new Sustainability Network Membership, open to individuals and organisations. Benefits include: your views being heard via a representative joining the SSW Board Membership; your name listed on SSW's website; free resources, exclusive quarterly e-newsletter and

a place at SSW's Annual conference with sustainability experts; discounted rates for SSW to carry out sustainability appraisals of plans/projects and tailored workshops/presentations; and your chance to get involved in SSW's work promoting sustainable development in the South West. **For more information and the application form**, see page 13 of SSW's 10 year review, at:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/assets/files/pdf/10_year_Review.pdf

Low carbon lobbying campaign website goes live - and free resources available

SSW campaign **Fair Shares, Fair Choice** invites people, businesses, organisations and groups to Sign Up to support the principle of fair and safe carbon shares for everyone. Sign Ups will be reported back to Government to show the level of demand for fair carbon shares to avoid the worst effects of climate change.



A new look, updated website www.fairsharesfairchoice.com launched in March where you can Sign Up to the principle as well as get advice and tips on how to make low carbon lifestyle and workplace choices. A brand new promotional film about the campaign and how you can get involved is also available on the website and exclusive Carbon Cards, showing your personal

fair share of Carbon for each year until 2017, are offered for free by emailing us.

For more information about the campaign and to arrange for a Fair Shares, Fair Choice workshop at your organisation/event, email freiny.miles@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

Key Messages from International Scientific Congress on Climate Change – is the SW ready & equipped to respond? http://climatecongress.ku.dk/newsroom/congress_key_messages/

Climatic Trends The climate system is moving beyond the patterns of natural variability within which our society and economy have developed and thrived. *Are we, in the South West, equipped to deal with the consequences of a rising surface temperature, sea-level rise and extreme climatic events?*

Social Disruption Contemporary societies are vulnerable to even modest levels of climate change, with poor nations and communities particularly at risk. *How are we going to restructure society to cope with increased levels of climate disruption while protecting the vulnerable in our region?*

Long-Term Strategy Rapid, sustained, and effective mitigation based on coordinated global and regional action is required to avoid "dangerous climate change." *How can we swiftly lead as a region so delays in initiating effective mitigation are minimized and the long-term social and economic cost reduced?*

Equity Dimensions Climate change is having differential effects on people in countries & regions. *Can the SW provide an effective adaptation safety net for those least capable of coping with climate change impacts?*

Inaction is Inexcusable There is no excuse for inaction. We already have many tools to deal effectively with the climate change challenge plus a wide range of benefits will flow from a concerted effort to alter our energy economy. *What economic, technological, behavioral and management approaches can we employ in our region to achieve the societal transformation required to decarbonise our economy?*

Meeting the Challenge We must overcome constraints and seize opportunities to achieve societal transformation to meet the climate change challenge, including enabling shifts from ineffective governance & weak institutions to innovative leadership in government, the private sector and an engaged society. *The South West must rise to the Challenge. Take action now and show the region is ready for a fair, safe response to tackling Climate Change – Sign Up to Fair Shares, Fair Choice www.fairsharesfairchoice.com*

The Regional Sustainable Development Framework (the 'Sustainability Shaper' - www.shapersw.net) contains the region's principles for sustainable development policy and delivery – an essential reference point for decision-makers and practitioners when addressing the questions raised above.

Regional Sustainable Development Indicators

Regional versions of national sustainable development indicators have been published to help provide a perspective of sustainable development in each of the nine Government Office Regions. The South West has shown clear improvements in Sustainable Communities indicators and emitted the third lowest amounts of CO₂ of the regions - 42 million tonnes (8.3 tonnes per resident; below the average rate for England). The South West also had amongst the highest proportions of rivers of good quality. Rates of burglary, vehicle theft and violence in the South West are amongst the lowest nationally and satisfaction with local area was highest of the national regions.

However the lowest percentage of journeys made by public transport was reported in the South West, and the region saw the second lowest reuse of previously developed land for new housing. See www.defra.gov.uk/sustainable/government/progress/regional/index.htm

Draft recommendations out now: Embedding SD into new regional arrangements

Following SSW's Annual Conference & consultation with regional stakeholders, the **draft recommendations for embedding Sustainable Development into the new government processes & strategy for the SW** are available for comment. **Comments to be submitted by April 17.** Report available at: www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/projects/sustainable_development_transition_and_transformation_-_embedding_sustainable_development_principles_into_future_regional_arrangements/.

Natural England – to get children to ‘splash out’

Countryside and parks have become ‘out of bounds’ to a generation of ‘cotton wool kids’ with fewer than ten percent playing in such places, according to new research by Natural England. Less than a quarter of children said they visit a patch of nature near their home on a weekly basis, compared with over half of adults who visited a local nature patch weekly when they were young. The survey marks the launch of Natural England’s ‘One Million Children Outdoors’ programme.



Poul Christensen, Chair for Natural England, said: “Whether through pond dipping or tree climbing, nature-based activities can play an important role in the educational and social development of children. Society must question its priorities in providing safe open spaces for play - the money spent on parks and trees in this country is a fraction of that spent on the roads that cause parents safety concerns.”

Full story at: www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/news/2009/020409.aspx

Are You Ready for Comprehensive Area Assessment?

“CAA is inherently about sustainability...Our assessments will embed sustainability by asking explicitly if improvements in outcomes are demonstrably sustainable” (Audit Commission).

Sustainability South West is offering local authorities and LSPs help to embed sustainability into SCS/LAAs. We have already worked with a number of LSPs and would be pleased discuss your needs. We aim to demystify sustainability with a simple and accessible approach to support you in making your strategic work fit for purpose. To find out more please contact: clare.mitchell@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

To find out how SSW supported Somerset partnership towards integrating sustainability into its Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement (LAA), please see the Improvement and Development Agency for local government (IDeA) www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pagelId=8866094.

Farewell to Future Footprints...

Since 2005 **Future Footprints**, a project of SSW, has been working with the tourism sector to engage visitors in making more sustainable choices. The project recognised that in a region with over 25 million annual visitors, encouraging visitors to take positive choices – to buy local food; take a car free trip – had significant potential to increase the sustainability of tourism. However Future Footprints has now passed the mantel for visitor communications to the newly formed Destination Management Organisations who have responsibility for delivering sustainable tourism and marketing their ‘destination’ through destinations sustainable tourism strategies and accompanying communication strategies.

Sustainability South West will continue to support and advocate for more sustainable tourism in the region, working with South West Tourism and others to develop a sustainability appraisal tool for tourism businesses. Future Footprints will cease to operate as a stand alone initiative as of April 2009. The Future Footprints website resources – including downloadable posters and case studies – will still be available on request. Please email clare.mitchell@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk for details.

Future Footprints thanks all funders and supporters who have helped the project over the last 3 years.

...And good luck in its new venture to Future Foundations

Sustainable Construction project **Future Foundations** – SSW’s first partnership project – will also no longer be a Sustainability South West project from April 2009 as it is to be mainstreamed as part of the region’s Constructing Excellence initiative. For more information, contact Tom Harper, Director, Constructing Excellence South West tom.harper@cesw.org.uk Telephone: 07919331913

Sussed!

👍 **Somerset top UK county for recycling** Somerset boasts a recycling rate of over 50% for household waste - with 92% of that recycled in the UK – putting it top of all UK counties www.edie.net/news/news_story.asp?src=nl&id=16098

👍 **Earth Hour** On 28 March, millions of people and businesses around the world ‘voted Earth’ by switching their lights off for one hour. If you ‘voted Earth’, make your vote count at the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference in December by recording it and sharing it with the world. Visit www.earthhour.org/

👍 **World Water Day** World Water Day took place on 22 March. To find out about events that took place around this year’s theme, Transboundary links, see www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/

👍 **New efficiency standards for household appliances** Fridges, freezers, televisions and washing machines are to have minimum energy standards reducing CO2 emissions in the UK by 2 million tonnes per annum and save the UK £150m per annum from reduced householders’ annual energy bills. www.wired-gov.net/wg/wg-news-1.nsf/lfi/172567

So Last Century...

👎 **Tesco’s: Lights for Flights ad** The supermarket is offering air miles in exchange for low-energy light bulbs – and they claim ‘every little helps’. Story at:

www.guardian.co.uk/environment/ethicallivingblog/2009/apr/06/tesco-advert-energy-saving-bulbs-flights-greenwash

On your radar?

New Biodiversity South West website launched www.biodiversitysouthwest.org.uk

The Biodiversity South West partnership has now launched its website, which contains details of the partnership and its work, as well as a wealth of information and resources about biodiversity issues in the region.

Prosperity without Growth?

A report from the Sustainable Development Commission (SDC) identifies the relentless pursuit of economic growth one of the root causes of the financial crisis and undermining social well-being. The SDC calls for a new economic system to deliver a fair and lasting prosperity worldwide. Increasing resource consumption has degraded an estimated 60% of the world's ecosystems in the last 25 years and the benefits of growth have been unequally distributed, with a fifth of the world's population sharing just 2% of global income. See www.sd-commission.org.uk/pages/redefining-prosperity.html

UK food 'revival' central to future health of our environment, culture and communities

New report from the National Trust, 'Appetite for Change', calls for an end to "anonymous food", finding the groundswell of interest in renewing the country's food culture central to meeting the challenges of a fast changing world. South West examples of local & seasonal food sourcing are profiled and the challenges of climate change and depletion of natural resources used to identify key questions facing Government, businesses and society. See www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-global/w-news/w-latest_news/w-news-foodreport/w-food_farming-appetite_change.htm

An Invitation to Join Us in the SHED: Sustainability in Higher Education Developers Network

Academics and others working with or in HE around sustainability are invited to join the SHED Share network, to share information, and the SHED Act network to join a network of active individuals in HEIs. Find out more at www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/projects/esd/shedact_f.htm

Developing Sustainable Cities

A major new resource from CABI sets out the clear opportunities to create better towns and cities through responding to climate change. Written by 30 leading experts, the Sustainable Cities website gives expert advice on planning, designing and managing a sustainable place. It cuts through the complexity with clear priorities for action. And it shows which places are getting it right. www.sustainablecities.org.uk

Insurance and Climate Change

The Association of British Insurers (ABI) has published 'Climate Adaptation: guidance on insurance issues for new developments'. The report offers advice for developers, planning authorities and new property buyers on building & buying new developments resilient to climate change impacts and how insurers assess climate resilience. See www.abi.org.uk/BookShop/ResearchReports/Climate%20Adaptation%20Guide%20Final.pdf
The new ABI strategy for 2009 'Preparing the UK for Climate Change' is also available, see: www.abi.org.uk/Document_Vault/Adaption_Strategy_final_draft_updated_21st_Jan_-_formatted2_5.pdf

Up & coming...

Homes for Good 09: Sustainable Home & Garden exhibition, 17-18 April, Westpoint Arena, Exeter

This year's theme is **Sustaining the Connections** and includes speakers from Ecos Trust, Energy Saving Trust, Regen SW, Forestry Commission and Devon County Council. See www.homesforgood.info

The Prince's May Day Summit, South West, & Carbon Positive Awards, 1 May, Bush House, Bristol

Taking action on climate change offers business opportunities including cost savings, improved trust and reputation. Find out more at the Summit and see low carbon organisations and communities awarded in the second annual SWRDA, BiTC & SSW C+ Carbon Positive Awards ceremony.

www.bitc.org.uk/environment/the_princes_may_day_network_on_climate_change/the_princes_may_day_summit/attend_an_event/south_west_09.html



Over to YOU Remember – we're your independent sustainability champs – and as an independent charity we're here to act as a critical friend for the common good. If you're involved in action for sustainability – let us know and we can champion it! Equally if you're experiencing barriers to adopting a more sustainable approach let us know so we can feed back messages on your behalf. Also let us know about local and regional events coming up over the next month for inclusion in the next edition.

Contact us: info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk **Deadline for submissions: close of Monday 27 April**

Other news from SSW available from:

www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk

Regular updates on **SSW coordinated projects** available:

Fair Shares, Fair Choice – the SW's growing low carbon movement

www.fairsharesfairchoice.com

Sustainability Shaper – the SW's sustainable development framework

www.shapersw.net

Planting Places – networks for SW urban greenspace project

www.plantingplaces.org.uk

Feedback: As a network of influential individuals your feedback on *Sustainability Now* is very valuable. Send comments to info@sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk (let us know if colleagues would like to be added to the e-distribution list).

Back issues: at www.sustainabilitysouthwest.org.uk/sustainability_now

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